

Jonathan Pieslak

e-mail: jpieslak@ccny.cuny.edu

www.jonathanpieslak.com

C.V. OVERVIEW

EMPLOYMENT

- Professor, The City College of New York and The Graduate Center, CUNY, 2016–present

EDUCATION

- University of Michigan: Ph.D. (Music Theory, 2003), M.M. (Music Composition, 2002), M.M. (Music Theory, 1999); Davidson College: B.A. (Music, Honors, 1996)

AREAS OF RESEARCH SPECIALIZATION

- My current research considers the cultural products of terrorism and political violence, with a focus on the audio and visual propaganda of Jihadi-Salafi movements. Other groups of interest include: American racist skinheads, Christian-affiliated radicalism, and eco-animal rights militancy.
- I am an active composer in contemporary classical and popular music.
- At CCNY, I am the Director of the Popular Music Studies B.A. degree, the highest-enrolled degree program in the Music Department.

SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- 2015–20 Minerva Research Award, U.S. Department of Defense, team-recipient. Topic: “Mobilizing Media: A Deep and Comparative Analysis of Magazines, Music, and Videos in the Context of Terrorism.” Individual award: \$175,000.
- *Radicalism & Music: An Introduction to the Music Cultures of al-Qa’ida, the Racist Skinheads, Christian-Affiliated Radicalism, and Eco-Animal Rights Militancy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2015).
- John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship (2011), Music Research Topic: Music and Extremist Cultures. Award: \$42,000.
- *Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009). Sales through 2020: over 1,700 copies.
- Media appearances and research featured in: *The New Yorker*, BBC, NPR, Fox News, *Il Manifesto* (Italy), *Globo* (Brasil), Austrian Public Radio and a variety of national and international newspaper, radio, and television.
- Articles published in/by: Oxford University Press, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, *Music Theory Spectrum*, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Modern Warfare*, *Popular Music*, Cambridge University Press, *Theory and Practice*, and many others.

- Invited lectures: Harvard University, Princeton University, The Norwegian FFI (Ministry of Defense), Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), U.S. Department of Defense, Syracuse University, Davidson College, and many others.

COMPOSER HIGHLIGHTS

- *Shards: Piano Music of Jonathan Pieslak* (Albany Records, 2014), Robert Auler, Piano.
- Reviews in: *The New York Times*, *Fanfare*, *Charlotte Observer*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *American Record Guide*, *Classical Voice of North Carolina*, among others.
- American Academy of Arts and Letters, Goddard Lieberman Fellowship, 2006. Award: \$15,000.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE, The City College of New York and Graduate Center, CUNY

- Courses Taught: Theory/Harmony (all levels, classical and popular music repertoire), Composition (undergrad and grad), Orchestration, Music and Extremist Culture, Tonal Composition, Counterpoint (16th and 18th century), Post-tonal Analysis, Popular Music Composition, Radicalism & Music.
- CCNY Mentoring Award, 2006.

NOTABLE

- Grant and award money earned through September 2020: \$230,000.
- Among the concert venues, ensembles, and performers who have performed my pieces, include: New York Philharmonic Ensembles, Parthenia Viol Consort, Iktus Percussion Quartet, Gotham Ensemble, Eric Bartlett (cello, NY Philharmonic and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra), Kate Dillingham (cello), Jessica Mathaes (violin), Anubis Saxophone Quartet, Cadillac Moon Ensemble, Lost Dog New Music Ensemble, Robert Auler (piano), Plainfield Symphony, Kiev Philharmonic, newEar (Kansas City), International Society for Contemporary Music, North/South Consonance, Teatro Colon (Argentina), U.S. Embassy in Vienna, the DiMenna Center, Merkin Concert Hall, Symphony Space, Bechstein Pianos (NYC), Carnegie Hall (Weill).
- In 2017, I was asked to advise Facebook, ASI Data Science (UK), and the UK Home Office on the use of automatic content recognition for the identification and removal of Islamic State media. This advising was based on the technology, “Marvin,” I designed. Subsequently, I have been invited to numerous conferences and sessions at the UN, notably the first session on countering terrorism propaganda online co-hosted by UK Prime Minister Theresa May, French President Emmanuel Macron, and Italian Prime Minister Paolo Silveri.

Jonathan Pieslak

e-mail: jpieslak@ccny.cuny.edu

www.jonathanpieslak.com

EDUCATION

2003	Ph.D., Music Theory, University of Michigan
2002	Master of Music, Music Composition, University of Michigan
1999	Master of Music, Music Theory, University of Michigan
1996	B.A. (Honors), Music Composition and Theory, Davidson College

EMPLOYMENT

2016–	Professor, The City College of New York, CUNY
2008–16	Associate Professor, The City College of New York, CUNY
2008–	Appointed to the Doctoral Faculty, The Graduate Center, CUNY
2003–08	Assistant Professor, The City College of New York, CUNY

BOOKS

- *Radicalism & Music: An Introduction to the Music Cultures of al-Qa'ida, the Racist Skinheads, Christian-Affiliated Radicalism, and Eco-Animal Rights Militancy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2015).
- *Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

ACADEMIC ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS (2006–present)

- “The Islamic State as Social Movement and the Concept of Protest in its *Anashid*.” Chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Protest Music*, edited by Noriko Manabe and Eric Drott (Oxford University Press, forthcoming [2021]), 8,300 words.
- “The Whites of Their Ears: The Music of Racist Skinhead Culture.” Chapter in *Music & War*, edited by Gwennyth Bravo (Routledge, forthcoming [TBD]), 6,200 words.
- Carol Winkler and Jonathan Pieslak. “ISIS’s Multimodal Strategies of Online Propaganda.” Chapter in *Online Terrorist Propaganda, Recruitment, and Radicalization*, edited by John Vacca (CRC Press, 2020), 291–304.
- Jonathan Pieslak, Brian Pieslak, and Anthony Lemieux. “Trends of *Anashid* Usage in Da‘esh Video Messaging and Their Implications for Identifying Terrorist Audio and Video.” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. Published: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1545828>
- Carol Winkler and Jonathan Pieslak, “Multimodal Sound/Visual Redundancy in ISIS Videos: A Close Analysis of Martyrdom and Training Segments.” *Journal of Policing, Intelligence, and Counter Terrorism* 13/3 (2018): 345–360.

- “The War in Iraq.” Chapter in *Music and War in the United States*, edited by Sarah Kraaz (New York: Routledge, 2018), 244–58.
- “The Sonic World of the Islamic State.” Chapter in *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*, edited by Michael Bull (London: Routledge, 2018), 132–142.
- Jonathan Pieslak and Nelly Lahoud. “The Anashid of the Islamic State: Influence, History, Text, and Sound.” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. Published: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1457420>
- Nelly Lahoud and Jonathan Pieslak. “The Music of the Islamic State.” *Survival* 60, no.1 (2018): 153–168.
- “A Musicological Perspective on Jihadi *anashid*.” Chapter in *Jihadi Culture*, edited by Thomas Hegghammer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 63–81. Arabic translation to be published by Librarie Jarrous.
- “Going after the Kids: Music and the ‘Extreme’ of Christian Fundamentalism.” Chapter in *The Auditory Cultural Reader 2*, edited by Michael Bull (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 393–404.
- “Music and the Iraq War.” Article commissioned by Oxford University Press for *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, second edition, edited by Charles Garrett (Oxford University Press, 2014).
- Review of Annegret Fauser, *Sounds of War: Music in the United States during World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 26/4 (2014): 549–552.
- “The Music Cultures of Radical Environmental and Animal-Rights Activism (REARA).” *JEX, Zeitschrift für Deradikalisierung und demokratische Kultur* (2014): 5–68.
- “A Collection of Interview Correspondences with Incarcerated ALF and Vegan Straight Edge/Hardline Activist Walter Bond.” *JEX, Zeitschrift für Deradikalisierung und demokratische Kultur* (2014): 69–92.
- “Music as an Inspiration for Combat among American Soldiers in Iraq.” Chapter in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Modern Warfare*, edited by John D. Buckley and George Kassimeris (London: Ashgate, 2010), 383–400.
- “Text, Sound, and Identity in Korn’s ‘Hey Daddy’.” *Popular Music* 27/1 (2008): 35–52.
- Review of Kevin Korsyn, *Decentering Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). *Music Theory Online*, 41/1 (2008).
- “Sound Targets: Music and the War in Iraq.” *The Journal of Musicological Research* 26/2–3 (2007): 123–150.
- “Re-casting Metal: Rhythm and Meter in the Music of Meshuggah.” *Music Theory Spectrum* 29/2 (2007): 219–245.

- “Conflicting Analytical Approaches to Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Tonality: An Archaeological Evaluation.” *Theory and Practice* 30 (2006): 97–132.

TRADE ARTICLES

- Review of Lisa Gilman, *My Music, My War: The Listening Habits of U.S. Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2016). *Volume! La Revue Des Musiques Populaires* 13/3 (2017).
- “For the Islamic State, Music is the ‘alcohol of the soul’.” *The Conversation*, September 28, 2015.
- Review of Mark LeVine, *Heavy Metal Islam: Rock, Resistance, and the Struggle for the Soul of Islam* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008). *Volume! La Revue Des Musiques Populaires* 9/2 (2012).
- “From Combat to Healing: The Music of War.” *Army* 60/2 (February 2010): 49–52.
- “Sounding Torture.” *Global Dialogue* (Cyprus) 12/1–2 (2010).
- “Sound On: Reflections on Music and the Iraq War.” *Journal of Music* (Ireland) 1/4 (2009): 34–40.

PRESENTATIONS

- Radicalisation Masterclass. Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security. Charles Sturt University. Canberra, Australia, September 2020.
- Carol Winkler and Jonathan Pieslak. “A Multimodal Interaction Model for Analyzing Da’esh Videos.” Paper presented at Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Reston, VA, November 4, 2017.
- Jonathan Pieslak and Nelly Lahoud. “The Evolution of the Islamic State through its Anashid.” Paper presented at Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Reston, VA, November 4, 2017.
- Carol Winkler and Jonathan Pieslak. “A Multimodal Approach to Analyzing Online Messaging of Extremist Groups.” Paper presented at International Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, February 23, 2017.
- “Music and Recitation within the Jihadist Movement.” Paper presented at Centra Technology, Inc., Arlington, VA, November 1, 2016.
- “Mobilizing Media: Islamic State Anashid.” Paper presented at the U.S. Department of Defense, Minerva Initiative Conference, Washington, D.C., September 14, 2016.
- “Exploring the Sonic World of the Islamic State.” Keynote address given at the CUNY GSIM Conference, “Music and Radicalism,” The Graduate Center, CUNY, New York, NY, April 23, 2016.

- “The Concept of Protest in the Anashid of the Islamic State.” Paper presented at Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, October 24, 2015.
- “Wade Page, the Hammerskin Nation, and the Music of Racist Skinhead Culture.” Paper presented on the “Music & War” panel, AMS/SEM/SMT joint meeting, New Orleans, LA, November 2, 2012.
- “The Sound of (non)-Music: Anashid, Jihad, and al-Qa’ida Culture.” Paper presented at the joint meeting of the AMS/SEM/SMT, New Orleans, LA, November 1, 2012.
- “The Strategic Use of Anashid in al-Qa’ida Culture.” Paper presented at a closed conference on jihadi culture sponsored by the Norwegian FFI (Ministry of Defense), Washington, DC, December 11, 2011.
- “The Role of Anashid in Jihadi Culture.” Paper presented to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Ottawa, Canada, December 9, 2011.
- “The Strategic Use of Anashid in al-Qa’ida Culture.” Paper presented at a closed conference on jihadi culture sponsored by the Norwegian FFI (Ministry of Defense), Oslo, Norway, June 30, 2011.
- “Music, War, and Soldiers’ Tales.” Article published in the conference proceedings of Emanuel University, Oradea, Romania (January 2011), 1–11.
- “Music to Hate (by).” Paper presented at Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY, April 22, 2011.
- “For Duty, Honor, and Country: The Recruiting Music of the US Military and the Islamic State in Iraq.” Paper presented at Syracuse University, Music in Conflict & Reconciliation, November 15, 2010.
- “For Duty, Honor, and Country: The Recruiting Music of the US Military and the Islamic State in Iraq.” Paper presented at Harvard University, Barwick Colloquium Series, September 18, 2009.
- “For Duty, Honor, and Country: The Recruiting Music of the US Military and the Islamic State in Iraq.” Paper presented at the German-American Frontiers of Humanities Conference, The American Philosophical Society and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Philadelphia, PA, October 3, 2008.
- “For Duty, Honor, and Country: The Recruiting Music of the US Military and the Islamic State in Iraq.” Paper presented at the Music of War Conference, Martin Institute at Stonehill College, Easton, MA, April 18, 2008.
- “For Duty, Honor, and Country: The Recruiting Music of the US Military and the Islamic State in Iraq.” Paper presented at the Experience Music Project Conference, Seattle, Washington, April 11, 2008.
- “Sound Targets: Music and the War in Iraq.” Paper presented at Davidson College, February 20, 2008.

- “Sound Targets: Music and the War in Iraq.” Paper presented at Christopher Newport University, Videoconference, November 14, 2007.
- “Live From Iraq: 4th25 and Soldier Rap.” Paper presented at the Fifty-Third Annual Meeting of The Society for Ethnomusicology, Columbus, Ohio, October 25, 2007. Panel Chairperson: Music and the War in Iraq.
- “Sound Targets: Music and the War in Iraq.” Paper presented at California State University, Stanislaus, Turlock, California, May 18, 2007.
- “Sound Targets: Music and the War in Iraq.” Invited lecture presented at The Arts and War Panel of Arts on Earth Initiative at the University of Michigan, March 21, 2007.
- “Sound Targets: Music and the War in Iraq.” Paper presented at the Fifty-Second Annual Meeting of The Society for Ethnomusicology, Honolulu, Hawaii, November 19, 2006.
- “Re-Casting Metal: Popular Music Analysis Goes Meshuggah.” Paper presented at The 2006 Annual Meeting of the Music Theory Society of New York State, Skidmore College, April 8, 2006.
- “Three Turns ‘in the Evening Air’: Schenkerian, Schoenbergian, and Neo-Riemannian Perspectives on a Debussy Prelude.” Paper presented at the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of The Society for Music Theory, Boston/Cambridge, Massachusetts, November 10, 2005.
- “Text, Sound, and Meaning in Korn’s ‘Hey Daddy’.” Paper presented at the Thirteenth Biennial Meeting of The International Association for the Study of Popular Music, Rome, Italy, July 28, 2005.
- “An ‘Allur’ing Challenge: A Neo-Riemannian Perspective of Schoenberg’s Op. 6/7, ‘Lockung’ and Developing a Transformational Relationship Between the [037] and [0258] *Tonnetze*.” Paper presented at the Dublin International Conference on Music Analysis, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland, June 25, 2005.
- “Conditions of Musical Composition: The Crisis of Self-Identity.” Paper presented at the 2004 Aspen Composer’s Conference, The Given Institute of the University of Colorado, August 9, 2004.
- Invited Guest Lecturer in Music Composition, Emanuel University, Oradea, Romania, January, 2004.

MEDIA APPEARANCES

My research on music and the Iraq War, in addition to my research on music in radical cultures, has been featured in a variety of national and international newspaper, radio, and television. The following is a list of media appearances, interviews, profiles, and expert opinion contributions, with url links where available.

- [The New Yorker](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/06/29/blam), “Talk of the Town,” June 29, 2009.
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/06/29/blam>

- BBC Radio 4, “Today Programme,” “Music Gives ‘Predator Mindset,’” July 20, 2009.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/listen_again/newsid_8158000/8158772.stm
- Los Angeles Times, “Music to Fight a war by,” February 15, 2010.
<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/feb/15/entertainment/la-et-soldiers-songs15-2010feb15>
- NK News.com, “We Grow as we Learn: Youth Indoctrination in North Korea,” November 6, 2014. <http://www.nknews.org/2014/11/we-grow-as-we-learn-youth-indoctrination-in-north-korea/>
- Globo.com (Brasil), “Soldados dos EUA usam musica como inspiracao e tatica de guerre no Iraque,” February 4, 2009.
<http://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Mundo/0,,MUL1068621-5602,00-SOLDADOS+DOS+EUA+USAM+MUSICA+COMO+INSPIRACAO+E+TATICA+D+E+GUERRA+NO+IRAQUE.html>
- Austrian Public Radio, “Veteran’s Day Stories,” November 11, 2009.
<http://www.pri.org/stories/2009-11-11/veterans-day-stories>
- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, “As it Happens,” February 25, 2010.
- WNYC, “Soundcheck,” May 21, 2009.
<http://soundcheck.wnyc.org/people/jonathan-pieslak/>
- Semana (Columbia), “A Todo Volumen,” March 6, 2010.
<http://www.semana.com/vida-moderna/articulo/todo-volumen/113974-3>
- The Guardian (UK), “Brainfood,” “How the MP3 became a combat weapon,” February 16, 2010.
<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2010/feb/16/brain-food-mp3-war-music>
- Fox News Channel, “The Mike Huckabee Show,” November 29, 2009.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubDXniI2_0&feature=youtube_gdata
- New York Post, “Notes from the Front,” May 19, 2009.
<http://nypost.com/2009/05/19/notes-from-the-front/>
- Sirius/XM Radio, “The Jay Thomas Show,” July 20, 2009
- VH1, “Metal Evolution,” January 6, 2012 – February 6, 2012.
http://www.vh1.com/shows/metal_evolution/series.jhtml
- The Guardian (UK), “How the iPod became a tool of war,” September 27, 2009.
<http://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2009/sep/28/heavy-metal-music-us-army-iraq>
- Globo.com (Brasil), “De Tchaivkovsky au new metal, musica y guerra andam lado a lado,” April 2, 2009.
<http://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Musica/0,,MUL1068722-7085,00-DE+TCHAIKOVSKY+AO+NEW+METAL+MUSICA+E+GUERRA+ANDAM+LADO+A+LADO.html>

- NPR, “To the best of our knowledge,” November 8, 2009.
<http://www.ttbook.org/book/jonathan-pieslak-soundtrack-war>
- WAMC, “The Academic Minute,” “Radicalism and Music”, November 24, 2015.
- Edmonton Sun (Canada), “Soldiers experiencing war set to their personal iPod playlists,” October 26, 2009.
<http://www.edmontonsun.com/news/world/2009/10/26/11523851-sun.html>
- Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, “The Soundtrack of War,” October 12, 2009
<http://fm4.orf.at/stories/1629002/>
- London Review of Books, “Short Cuts,” July 23, 2009.
<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v31/n14/adam-shatz/short-cuts>
- The Chronicle of Higher Education, “Scholarly Discord,” May 8, 2009.
<http://chronicle.com/article/Scholarly-Discord/44312>
- Alex Ross’s Blog, “The Rest is Noise,” May 7, 2009.
<http://www.therestisnoise.com/2009/05/more-on-music-and-torture.html>
- Newser.com, “iPods give war a soundtrack,” May 19, 2009.
<http://www.newser.com/story/59469/ipods-give-war-a-soundtrack.html>
- New Hampshire Public Radio, “Word of Mouth,” July 1, 2009.

Notable

- In 2017, I was asked to advise Facebook, ASI Data Science (UK), and the UK Home Office on the use of automatic content recognition for the identification and removal of Islamic State media. This advising was based on the technology, “Marvin,” I designed. Subsequently, I have been invited to numerous conferences and sessions at the UN, notably the first session on countering terrorism propaganda online co-hosted by UK Prime Minister Theresa May, French President Emmanuel Macron, and Italian Prime Minister Paolo Silveri.
- July 2, 2009: *Sound Targets* reached #2 in Amazon sales rank for Middle East History and Criticism
- July 20, 2009: *Sound Targets* reached #1 in Amazon UK sales rank for Asian Studies.
- *Sound Targets* sales through 2017: over 1,400 copies.
- Research and award money earned/granted through September 2020: \$217,000.
- In 2007, I published one of the first scholarly articles to address rhythm and meter in music of the Swedish ("progressive" or "technical") metal band, Meshuggah. When Meshuggah's sixth album, *Obzen*, was released in 2008, Nuclear Blast Records mentioned the article in the press packet, and since then the article has become fairly well-known among fans, musicians, and metal authors as a reference source for the distinct rhythmic and metric techniques that distinguish their music.

REVIEW QUOTES

- “*Sound Targets* reveals just how pervasively popular music has shaped contemporary U.S. military culture. . . . This thoughtful and provocative study will certainly attract a wide audience concerned with music's roles in the time of war.” —W. Anthony Sheppard, author of *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater*
- “I highly recommend this book for all those interested in relationships between artistic expression and politics, war, militarism, and psychology. Its writing style is both accessible and sophisticated, making it appropriate for use in either undergraduate or graduate courses.”—*Journal of Folklore Research*
- “Pieslak’s *Sound Targets* offers a serious and insightful examination of how music was used by American soldiers in the Iraq War.” —*Times Higher Education*
- “All in all, the author has amassed a profusion of valuable information and data about music and the Iraq War . . . Research into music’s role in armed conflict is in its infancy . . . and we are in need of the kinds of histories and contexts he establishes and the accounts he records, especially in such an eminently readable and accessible text. . . . [W]e must recognize Jonathan Pieslak for having bravely opened the door for further exploration through his pioneering study.” —*American Music*
- “Pieslak’s careful consideration of soldier accounts about music and his detailed analyses of specific musical texts, videos, and repertoires make *Sound Targets* an important and timely contribution to the growing discourse around music and war.” —*MUSICultures*
- “[This] book documents and explains various ways in which music is intertwined throughout the lives of many American soldiers . . . serving in Iraq. The author’s purpose for this work is to offer a glimpse into these military lives and add to the literature on music and war.” —*Music Reference Services Quarterly*

Radicalism and Music Endorsements

- “*Radicalism and Music* is a compelling read, rigorously researched and accessible to the interested reader. Pieslak is to be commended for his neutral approach: he comes across as intellectually intimate with his subjects without being committed to their respective agenda or passing judgment.”
—Nelly Lahoud, author of *The Jihadis’ Path to Self-Destruction*
- “*Radicalism and Music* is a well-argued foil to the notion that music is a universal language that brings people together. The subtheme of music and its relationship to the Internet provides important groundwork for thinking of music as a particular ‘information technology’ without divorcing it from its ritual function.”
—Benjamin J. Harbert, coeditor of *The Arab Avant-Garde: Music, Politics, Modernity*
- “Pieslak’s work reveals uses of music that are questionable and discomfiting and thus rarely studied. By skillfully comparing music’s role in a range of extremist cultures, Pieslak remaps the bounds of human musicality, showing how music’s social and emotional power can inspire violence as much as community, cultivate hatred as much as beauty.”
—Daniel Cavicchi, author of *Listening and Longing: Music Lovers in the Age of Barnum*

- “Jonathan Pieslak, apart from being a wonderful composer and teacher and thinker, invented a new genre of musicology for *Radicalism and Music*, a method involves equal parts deep knowledge and derring-do: to explore the meaning of music to either al-Qa’ida *or* the Westboro Baptist Church, and to then walk “across the aisle” and compare them to the most extreme animal rights activists takes an heroic amount of *sangfroid*. His bravado is our gain, as we all try to understand the complexities of our world that can seldom, if ever, be easily explained”
—Daniel Felsenfeld, composer

RECENT COMPOSITIONAL ACTIVITY

- Discography:
Crossings: New Music for Cello (New Focus Recordings, 2015), Kate Dillingham, Cello and Amir Khosrowpour, Piano. Reviews in: *WQXR Q2*, album of the week (February 2, 2015) and *Christianbcarey.com*. Piece: “Bhakti 4, Atma-Shatakam (Song of the Self)”.
- Shards: Piano Music of Jonathan Pieslak* (Albany Records, 2014), Robert Auler, Piano. Reviews in: *The New York Times*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Charlotte Observer*, *American Record Guide*, *Classical Voice of North Carolina*, *Fanfare*, *Syracuse.com*. Entire disc devoted to my piano music.
- Contemporary Eclectic Music for the Piano, Volume 10* (New Ariel Records, 2010), Jeffrey Jacob, Piano. Piece: “Spiral”.
- One World Many Voices, Vol. 7* (Earthsongs Music, 2010) Las Sirenas Women’s Choir. Piece: “Solar Flares”.
- Masterworks of the New Era, Volume 14* (ERM Media, 2009), Kiev Philharmonic, Robert Ian Winstin, Conductor. Piece: “Inertia”.
- Masterworks of the New Era, Volume 4* (ERM Media, 2005), Kiev Philharmonic, Robert Ian Winstin, Conductor. Piece: “severed”.
- My music was featured prominently in the recent film, *Shockwaves* (2014), by the highly acclaimed media artist and Guggenheim Fellow, Kasumi. The film has been screened widely to an international audience.
<http://www.shockwavesthemovie.com/credits.html>
- PSC-CUNY Research Award (2013) for the recording of *Shards*; PSC-CUNY Research Award (2005) for the recording of “severed”.
- Composition masterclass and invited Composer-in-Residence SUNY, Oswego, March 9-10, 2010, including a complete concert dedicated to my work.
- Composition Masterclass with the Iktus Percussion Quartet, State University of New York, Purchase, Purchase, NY, October 14, 2008.
- Invited Composer-in-Residence, California State University, Stanislaus, Turlock, California, May 15–19, 2007.
- American Academy of Arts and Letters, Goddard Lieberman Fellowship, May 2006.

- Invited Guest Lecturer in Music Composition, Emanuel University (Oradea, Romania), 2004.
- 2003 Jerome Foundation and American Composers Forum, Composers Commissioning Project Commission (CPP).
- MacDowell Colony Residency, November 2003.

Notable

- My choral works, *In pulverem mortis*, *Solar Flares*, and *Missing Music*, are published by Earthsongs Music. *Solar Flares*, for women's chorus, has been performed widely and is part of the St. Mary's College Choir Series, edited by Nancy Menk.
- June 6, 2014: *Shards* reached #19 in Amazon sales rank for Instrumental Music Sales.
- Among the concert venues, ensembles, and performers who have performed my pieces, include: New York Philharmonic Ensembles, Parthenia Viol Consort, Iktus Percussion Quartet, Gotham Ensemble, Eric Bartlett (cello, NY Philharmonic and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra), Kate Dillingham (cello), Jessica Mathaes (violin), Anubis Saxophone Quartet, Cadillac Moon Ensemble, Lost Dog New Music Ensemble, Robert Auler (piano), Plainfield Symphony, Kiev Philharmonic, newEar (Kansas City), International Society for Contemporary Music, North/South Consonance, Teatro Colon (Argentina), U.S. Embassy in Vienna, the DiMenna Center, Merkin Concert Hall, Symphony Space, Bechstein Pianos (NYC), Carnegie Hall (Weill).
- My pieces have been performed in North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania; they have been broadcast on WQXR, Society for New Music "Fresh Ink," WDAV Classical (NC), Radio Resita (Romania), among many others.

REVIEW QUOTES

- NY Times, "This beautiful recording of the piano music of Jonathan Pieslak, played with extraordinary rhythmic clarity and expression by the pianist Robert Auler, spans extremes...above all an assured and instantly communicative musical language."
- American Record Guide, "...a skillful and evocative piano composer...This is a rewarding release by a composer we need to hear more from."
- Syracuse.com, "*Shards*," Albany Records' radiant 2014 release, features spirited artist Robert Auler performing Jonathan Pieslak's classical compositions for solo piano. Pieslak, a brilliant contemporary composer, references the sounds of rock, jazz and Vedic chant to create innovative music ranging in mood from sizzling to serene..."
- Charlotte Observer, "Tchaikovsky and Pieslak don't have a lot in common stylistically, though both pianists tackle their virtuosic and challenging music with aplomb. (Each disc is not only well-played but superbly recorded.) But the pieces, written more than a century apart, have this in common: They reflect the times they were composed and the states of their composers' minds. And both were written by men in their late 20s to mid 30s, becoming ever more assured while finding their voices...The Tchaikovsky disc makes for easier listening, because folks with even a slight grounding in the classics have been exposed to his music. (Although 'American Atmospheres' is almost as quickly accessible.) The Pieslak

selections take us through a wider range of emotional experiences and show us more keyboard colors. Both deserve a crack at your ears.”

- *Classical Voice of North Carolina*, “Masterful performances distinguish this fine release of new music by Davidson grad...This is fine debut release; we hope it will have a successor.”
- *Timeout NY*, “...mischievous and rhythmic *Gray Fractions*...”
- *Fanfare*, “...a most intriguing, and rewarding, disc.”

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The City College of New York and Graduate Center, CUNY (Courses Taught)

The Graduate Center: Introduction to the Analysis of Post-Tonal Music

Dissertations: Nick Stoia (chair), Ina Park (chair), Aaron Liu-Rosenbaum (chair), Inessa Bazayev, Thomas Robinson (chair), Patrick Muchmore, Dominique McCormick, Megan Lavengood, Trey Files (advisor).

CCNY Master's: 16th-century Counterpoint
18th-century Counterpoint
Music and Extremist Culture
Graduate Composition
Structures 2 (Post-Tonal Analysis)
Pedagogy of Great Composers (Tonal Composition)
Music and Indoctrination
Radicalism & Music

CCNY Undergraduate: Music Theory I–IV (classical and popular music repertoire)
Musicianship I–IV
Popular Music Composition
Undergraduate Composition
Orchestration
Winner of the 2005–06 CCNY Mentoring Award

SELECTED UNIVERSITY SERVICE

The City College of New York, CUNY

2014–17 Executive Committee
2014–17 Curriculum Committee
2010 MacCaulay Honors College, Thesis Advisor
2008– Assessment Coordinator, Music Department
2007–08 Middle States Assessment Outcomes, Committee Chair
2007–10 Executive Committee
2007–10 Outstanding Teaching Award/Mentoring Award Committee
2006–07 CUNY Research Foundation Proposal Reviewer
2006–16 Graduate Committee, Written and Oral Comprehensive Exams
2006–08 Irani Fellowship, Faculty Mentor
2006–11 CUNY Honors College Admission Committee
2005–09 Kaye Fellowships Application Committee
2005–07 City College Fellowship, Faculty Mentor

- 2004–08 Mellon-Mays Fellowship, Faculty Mentor
2004–09 Curriculum Committee
- 2018– *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Reviewer
2015–16 *Music Theory Spectrum*, Reviewer
2014– *Music Theory Online*, Reviewer
2006– BMI Foundation/Evelyn Buckstein Scholarship Coordinator. I procured the funding and administrate a scholarship from the BMI Foundation, which is the largest departmental award we offer to our current majors. It has provided \$70,000 since inception and has been an important source of funding for minority students in the department who constitute 9 of the 12 winners.
2006– CUNY Research Foundation Proposal Reviewer

VOLUNTEERING

- New York Cares, Mock Interviews at Midtown Community Court, 2011. Helped low-level offenders prepare for job interviews.
- New York Cares, English Conversation Partners at Arab-American Family Support Center, 2011. Conversation lessons with adult ESL students at the Arab-American Family Support Center.
- Team Rubicon, Hurricane Sandy clean-up and home “muck-out,” 2012. Assisted in the interior home demolition for residents in Far Rockaway.
- New York Cares, Hurricane Sandy clean-up and home “muck out”, 2012–13. Assisted in the interior home demolition for residents in Far Rockaway.
- New York Cares, Meal Preparation at St. Bart’s, 2014–15. Assisted the chef in the preparation of a meal for approximately 225–250 people.
- Surfrider Foundation, beach clean-up, 2015.